

MOTION BY SUPERVISOR MICHAEL D. ANTONOVICH

December 9, 2008

PROJECT 51

In October of 2008, after suffering harassment and bullying, 14-year-old Jeremiah Lasater tragically committed suicide at Vasquez High School in Acton. This incident ignited an outpour of reports of similar unresolved incidents from concerned parents and community residents.

To address this growing problem, the California State Legislature recently passed Assembly Bill 86, authored by Assemblyman Ted Lieu, which will amend section 48900 of the California Education Code to specifically include bullying and cyberbullying to the list of offenses eligible for suspension or expulsion. This amendment becomes effective January 1, 2009.

In memory of his son, Mr. Jeff Lasater is creating a new program to work with the Acton/Agua Dulce School District and surrounding community that will establish a process for reporting and investigating cases of bullying and harassment; and provide support to students involved in these incidents. This program, called "Project 51," named after Jeremiah's football jersey number, will launch a toll-free number that students can call to report incidents of bullying they have witnessed or experienced themselves; and that parents can call when the school is unresponsive to their inquiries. Within 24 hours, Project 51 school staff will ensure that each claim is investigated by the school.

Program components similar to Project 51 have been successfully implemented in other school districts across Los Angeles County. Given its ongoing work with school superintendents to identify and address policy issues affecting students, the Education

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Coordinating Council is uniquely positioned to facilitate Project 51 implementation, which will be a positive tribute to the memory of Jeremiah Lasater and an important step in supporting AB 86, the State's new anti-bullying law.

I, THEREFORE, MOVE that the Board of Supervisors direct the Education Coordinating Council to:

- Contact Mr. Jeff Lasater and provide support in the creation of the Project 51 program, offering advice and information on existing anti-bullying and harassment programs in place in Los Angeles County schools;
- Coordinate with the Acton/Agua Dulce School District Board of Trustees and staff on program implementation;
- Organize a public outreach effort that includes hosting community meetings throughout the Acton and Agua Dulce areas, providing information about anti-bullying and harassment programs to the community and media, and enclosing information about available student support throughout the school district; and
- Report back to the Board of Supervisors with a status update within 60 days.

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